

Handy Hints from UKMSA Members

- Men's Shed works when everyone is involved and is able to put their two pennyworth in, making them feel they have an ownership in their Shed...!
- List all your open projects on a board near the entrance to ensure all Shedders know what projects there are to do.
- White vinegar is a mild acid and makes a cheap and remarkably efficient rust-remover - just soak the item/tool in pure vinegar overnight, then remove with a wire brush or steel wool.
- Get all Shedders who are buying material or tools to always ask the supplier (after being given the price) "Can you do that for less for the Men's Shed ?" (You'll be surprised how often they can)
- List the medicines that a Shedder is taking regularly on the reverse of their badge, so that any medical personnel can access this information rapidly.
- To any visitor calling to see if they can visit the Shed to learn how it works — If they ask "Do I have to pay to visit?" Say no,but tea bags, coffee and biscuits are always appreciated !
- The tall multi-drawer metal cabinets, with drawers about 2 inches deep, that secretaries keep paper and envelopes etc. In are really good for storing tools in apart from those with sharp edges.
- Consider registering your Men's Shed as a charity. It gives you status, some store discounts and an 80% discount on business rates.
- Get a trailer - it'll prove invaluable.
- Get your shed members out there in their community working in partnership.
- Always take time out to chat to visitors and non-members to your Men's Shed
- Instead of asking for a donation of money we ask the business to buy some timber for Buddy Benches or cartridges for the printer.
- Space! make sure you have enough of it for all your projects
- Always think safety, around tools and machines.
- Clean paint brushes immediately after use. They will last longer — OR — If painting with emulsion, and you don't finish the job in a day, seal the (unclean) brushes in a plastic bags and seal tightly. They will usable in the morning
- Buy a roll of "Multi Purpose Non-Slip Mat" from Pound World - it's good for using as router mat and saves using a loads of clamps.
- After using Hammerite or similar paints, brushes can be cleaned in brush restorer (not brush cleaner). Every brand we've tried seems to work and it's much cheaper than using thinners.
- Make your own furniture restorer by mixing equal volumes of white vinegar, methylated spirit and linseed oil. Give it a good shake; it smells like slightly rancid salad dressing but not unpleasant.
- If using consumables like paint, mastic, plaster filler, in fact anything which has a use by date, don't let what is left go off at home. Take it to the Shed where someone might make good use of it.
- Put up a list of consumables such as old paint, mastic, filler etc. that you may need. Another Shedder may have some at home which he will never use.

- Swap sandpaper for Abranet which is an abrasive mesh. We think it works better and lasts longer. Abranet allows more of the dust to remain in the mesh until it is disposed of by tapping it into a container. The mesh is Velcro backed and is designed so that you can use it with a holder which is comfortable and gives you a flat surface. The holder has a port for attaching a hose to a vacuum cleaner for dust-free sanding but it does mean you have another hose to attach or store.
- If you have trouble removing a nail with a claw hammer, put a small block of wood under the hammer head to give extra leverage
- If you're finding it difficult screwing into a piece of wood (particularly if not using a power driver) give the screw a short sharp tap with a hammer - sometimes the screw thread gets stuck in the wood grain and this can dislodge it
- Before getting down to a messy job, rub washing up liquid into your hands until it has effectively disappeared. When you come to wash your hand at the end of the job the dirt will come off much more easily
- Don't waste money on upmarket working gloves - put some woollen gloves inside a pair of 'moleskins' - keeps your hand warm, dry and protected for half the price
- If you're planning to remove screws at a future date (maybe it's a flat pack bed or wardrobe) put a spot of Vaseline on the screw tip and it will come out lovely when you need to dismantle
- If someone keeps 'borrowing' your pencil, cut it in half and sharpen all four ends - lasts longer and personalises your pencil so others can't say 'I took it by mistake'
- To accommodate more men, make two portable tool boxes for use outside on the workmates under a canopy
- To help raise funds, advertise a "Free Shed Clearing Service" then refurbish any tools found which can then be sold at Fairs or Car Boot Sales.

[Our thanks to these Sheds for these 'Handy Hints'](#)

Ballykelly Men's Shed

Bristol Patchway

Camden Town Shed

Frome Men's Shed

Men in Sheds Eltham

Milton Keynes MIS

Portland Men's Shed

Southbourne Men's Shed

The Bodgers Hut – Whitstable

The Jed Shed

The Repair Shed - Hemel Hempstead

The Shed Melksham

The Silvers Workshop Reading